



UNITED STATES MARINE CORPS
3D BATTALION, 8TH MARINE REGIMENT
MULTI-NATIONAL FORCE-WEST
I MARINE EXPEDITIONARY FORCE (FORWARD)
UNIT 73275
FPOAE 09509-3275

IN REPLY REFER TO:
5757
G-3
01 Sep 06

From: Commanding Officer, 3d Battalion, 8th Marines
To: Commandant of the Marine Corps (HDH-4)
Via: Commanding General, I Marine Expeditionary Force (FORWARD)

Subj: 3D BATTALION, 8TH MARINES COMMAND CHRONOLOGY

Encl: (1) 3d Battalion, 8th Marines Command Chronology for the month
of August 2006.

1. The 3d Battalion, 8th Marines Command Chronology covers the period from 1 August to 31 August 2006. Classified documents pertinent to the conduct of combat operations during Operation IRAQI FREEDOM (OIF) 05-07, to include the 3d Battalion, 8th Marines, are available on the I MEF (Fwd) classified website: www.mnfw.usmc.smil.mil. Copies of these critical documents will accompany the final command chronology. 3d Battalion, 8th Marines will continue to submit subsequent command chronologies on a monthly basis while deployed to OIF 05-07.

2. Digital signature / document scanner not available.

3. Point of contact for this submission is (b) (6) at
TAC (b) (6), (b) (6)

P. M. Henry
(b) (6)

Command Chronology 01 AUG 06 to 31 AUG 06
Section I: Administration

UNIT DESIGNATION

Reporting Unit Code: 12230

Location: Hurricane Point, Ar Ramadi, Iraq

PERSONNEL INFORMATION

COMMANDING OFFICER

(b) (6) 01 AUG 06 - 31 AUG 06

EXECUTIVE OFFICER

(b) (6) 01 AUG 06 - 31 AUG 06

SUBORDINATE COMMANDERS

INDIA COMPANY

(b) (6) 01 AUG 06 - 31 AUG 06

KILO COMPANY

(b) (6) 01 AUG 06 - 31 AUG 06

LIMA COMPANY

(b) (6) 01 AUG 06 - 31 AUG 06

WEAPONS COMPANY

(b) (6) 01 AUG 06 - 31 AUG 06

H & S COMPANY

(b) (6) 01 AUG 06 - 31 AUG 06

PRINCIPAL STAFF MEMBERS

S-1

(b) (6) 01 AUG 06 - 31 AUG 06

S-2

(b) (6) 01 AUG 06 - 31 AUG 06

S-3

(b) (6) 01 AUG 06 - 31 AUG 06

S-3A

(b) (6) 01 AUG 06 - 31 AUG 06

S-4

(b) (6) 01 AUG 06 - 31 AUG 06

S-6

(b) (6) 01 AUG 06 - 31 AUG 06

AIR OFFICER

(b) (6) 01 AUG 06 - 31 AUG 06

FACS		
(b) (6)		01 AUG 06 - 31 AUG 06
		01 AUG 06 - 31 AUG 06
BATTALION SURGEON		
(b) (6)		01 AUG 06 - 31 AUG 06
MEDICAL OFFICER		
(b) (6)		01 AUG 06 - 31 AUG 06
BN GUNNER		
(b) (6)		01 AUG 06 - 31 AUG 06
CHAPLAIN		
(b) (6)		01 AUG 06 - 31 AUG 06
COMMAND HISTORIAN		
(b) (6)		01 AUG 06 - 31 AUG 06
SERGEANT MAJOR AND SENIOR ENLISTED		
SERGEANT MAJOR		
(b) (6)		01 AUG 06 - 31 AUG 06
S-3 CHIEF		
(b) (6)		01 AUG 06 - 31 AUG 06
INDIA COMPANY		
(b) (6)		01 AUG 06 - 31 AUG 06
KILO COMPANY		
(b) (6)		01 AUG 06 - 31 AUG 06
LIMA COMPANY		
(b) (6)		01 AUG 06 - 31 AUG 06
WEAPONS COMPANY		
(b) (6)		01 AUG 06 - 31 AUG 06
H & S COMPANY		
(b) (6)		01 AUG 06 - 31 AUG 06
MEDICAL		
(b) (6)		01 AUG 06 - 31 AUG 06

AVERAGE TASK FORCE STRENGTH

MARINE OFFICER: 48

MARINE ENLISTED: 848

NAVY OFFICER: 4

NAVY ENLISTED: 55

CIVILIAN: 4

ARMY OFFICER: 1

ARMY ENLISTED: 15

AIR FORCE ENLISTED: 0

AVERAGE TOTAL STRENGTH: 972

LEGAL

BATTALION NJPS: 1

SUMMARY COURT MARTIALS: 1

SPECIAL COURT MARTIALS: 0

GENERAL COURT MARTIALS: 0

INVESTIGATIONS: 6 TOTAL: 1 EOF, 2 MISSING GEAR, 2 LAW OF WAR VIOLATION, 1 NEGLIGENT DISCHARGE

DETENTION OPERATIONS: 104 DETAINEES PROCESSED

LEGAL ASSISTANCE: 14 MARINES

AWARDS APPROVED BY THE BN CO

LETTERS OF APPRECIATION: 0

MERITORIOUS MASTS: 0

CERTIFICATE OF COMMENDATION: 40

NAVY AND MARINE CORPS ACHIEVEMENT MEDAL: 25

NAVY AND MARINE CORPS ACHIEVEMENT MEDAL WITH COMBAT "V": 8

NAVY AND MARINE CORPS COMMENDATION MEDAL: 1

NAVY AND MARINE CORPS COMMENDATION MEDAL WITH COMBAT "V": 0

Command Chronology 01 AUG 06 to 31 AUG 06
Section II: Narrative Summary

S-2

The month of August began with a remarkable increase in violent attacks in Ramadi, but violence waned off as the month drew to a close. Ramadi ended the month of August with 29% of the violence in the entire AO. During this time the Intelligence Shop continued to develop and exploit the comprehensive link analysis that outlines the insurgent key leadership cells throughout the AO as well the cells that operate independently. The link analysis chart, which was developed for this specific AO, is updated on a daily basis.

The insurgency has become increasingly complex in the last month with the introduction of Harakat Islamia, a group that has been targeting AQI leadership and has recently claimed responsibility for the deaths of nine (9) AQI leaders. With the appearance of this group in the AO, Coalition Forces will have an opportunity to target AQI in a somewhat unconventional method.

Operation VALDEZ was conducted during the month of August. This operation was conducted in order to attack the enemy's economic center of gravity and prevent freedom of movement. The enemy has a strong grip on the petroleum industry in and around Ramadi and this operation assisted in the understanding of how petroleum is transported into the city and how AQI taps into that supply. The operation consisted of three (3) different objectives that yielded sixty seven (67) detainees and nine (9) computer hard drives and, most importantly, greater understanding of who controls the oil infrastructure and movement into the Al Anbar Province and Ramadi.

Towards the end of the month, the Intelligence Shop began the turnover of information to the 1/6 advance party. A comprehensive brief highlighting the high and low points of the deployment was created and given to the advance party and will be given again to the main body once it arrives in September. The main focus of the shop is now turning over all of the information that 3/8 has acquired from the AO and to attempt to pass on all of that knowledge to 1/6 to ensure their success in this volatile city.

S-3

The Operations Section continued to support enduring tasks within 3/8 battle space during the month of August. The enduring tasks in zone consisted of mounted/dismounted patrols, snap vehicle checkpoints, ambush patrols, over watch positions, fixed site security, census patrols, mosque monitoring, and cordon and searches. The Combat Operations Center (COC) provided command and control to several significant events throughout the battle space. These significant events include Iraqi Police (IP) screenings, multiple complex attacks against fixed site positions, and detainment of possible insurgents within the battle space.

Of particular interest was the battalion's preparation for the Relief-in-Place (RIP) with 1st Battalion, 6th Marines. The Operations Section finalized the plan for the RIP and sent the Operations Chief ADVON back to Camp Lejeune. The battle space and boundaries were changed to reflect the upcoming operations to be conducted by 1/1 AD in zone.

From 17-21 August the battalion conducted Operation VALDEZ. The purpose of this operation was to disrupt AIF financial sources by securing fuel trucks at the ECP. The drivers of the vehicles were temporarily detained for further exploitation. On 20-21 August the battalion conducted operations at the Ministry of Oil and Oil Department. These missions resulted in forty five (45) detainees.

On 21 August the battalion began Operation CENTRAL PARK. This operation focused on the demolition of buildings North of the Government Center. The buildings were broken down into zones A through F. The Rasheed Hotel, 3 Blue AC building, Swiss Cheese, and Michigan store fronts were all key locations utilized by insurgents that were destroyed.

The Operations Officer assisted in the delivery of aviation ordnance on three occasions while conducting operations in the COC. All three Close Air Support strikes were cleared in support of OP Horea. This ordnance consisted of (1) LMAV on 05 August. On 11 August the Forward Air Controller at OP Horea utilized (1) LMAV and (1) Hellfire. Debriefs and After Actions were conducted within the S-3 following each significant event. The Forward Air Controllers (FAC) continued to rotate every eight days to OP Horea. The FAC's continue to support TF Dagger missions and Battalion Quick Reaction Force missions as required. The FAC's continue to support enduring task in zone.

The Operations Officer held a section coordination meeting for future planning guidance and redeployment requirements. The S-3 published the Reset the Force FRAGO. The Marines of the Operations Section cycled through the required classes. The S-3/Future Plans cell focused its final planning efforts in August on refining and developing Operation HORNED VIPER II. This operation is the Redeployment of TF 3/8 to CONUS. The S-3 and S-3A completed the redeployment guidance for all sections and companies.

S-4

The S-4 has geared towards preparations for redeployment while still focusing on the tasks at hand. Retrograde of excess gear gained the attention of LogCom who has put in increased time and effort in to the collection and documentation of this gear by unit. The TPFDD and PAOM datum have been constantly updated to reflect the progress made during this month.

In preparation for redeployment, the S-4 has taken a collective look at the needs of the Battalion and has taken the steps necessary to conduct a successful retrograde. Movement of equipment, publications, and other vital gear from Iraq to CONUS required a series of requests and inspections to ensure this gear moved as planned. Excess gear was identified by official MEF documentation and that gear was moved to the staging lot in TQ. The movement of this excess gear has been facilitated by internal and external support. In addition to moving excess gear to the excess lot, gear was cross-leveled with units who are deficient in a specific TAMCN. The majority of this gear has been moved, signed for, and dropped off the CMR.

Documents designed to ensure the smooth transition of our retrograde and a successful turnover were utilized and coordinated through the logistics and operation hubs of the Battalion. Both the TPFDD and PAOM received continual updates from the S-3 and S-4 in a collaborated effort to ensure a smooth transition back to CONUS.

Overall, the S-4 focused towards getting accounts prepared for the turnover and making the required moves to set 1/6 up for a comfortable start.

Maintenance Management shifted more effort towards ensuring accountability and accuracy of all gear in the maintenance cycle. Special equipment items still take a significant amount of time and energy. TQ support has been received from both 54th Engineers and Combat Trains in the month. The final HPJ's were installed during the month bringing the total count to 136. The FIS has yet to receive M1114s in their stock. The Battalion is now short two (2) of these vehicles.

Supply continued to support rapid requests and remains in the mid 90th percentile for completion of these requests. During August, Supply concluded a Monthly Serialized inventory and began a CMR Reconciliation in preparation of RIP/TOA. The Battalion ensured that the Marines inventoried all CIF gear in order to identify any deficiencies in a timely manner. CMR/MAL reconciliation and a D9L letter were initiated in this month. Supply has lined up funding for CONUS support in support of retrograde and future garrison training events.

Field Mess provided three (3) meals per day to Hurricane Point and the ECP's in the immediate vicinity. Field Mess also supported FOBs like Government Center by providing hot meals. The support originated from Field Mess providing representatives at Camp Ramadi who helped push the required chow to Hurricane Point. From Hurricane Point the Field Mess Staff helped serve and distribute chow to all companies on Hurricane Point.

Motor Transport completed an inventory of all rolling stock in the Battalion and forwarded it to MEF. The section also replaced a wide range of deadlining parts and continued to offer assistance to each using unit. The remaining M1116 vehicles have been laterally transferred to other units, leaving, in large part, only Marine Corps vehicles in the Camp Ramadi Motor Pool. Motor Transport has also supported the 5K Forklift by providing fluids needed for function and movement of this gear to the Battalion area.

Armory completed an SL-3 inventory for the companies and has ordered any equipment that was needed. They have also begun to restock their PEB and are wrapping up any erroneous maintenance issues from the past. The Armory evacuated several optics and weapons to TQ. Image intensifiers are not consumable and were ordered directly from the SMU. These third echelon capabilities made it a lot easier to keep the PVS-7B ready for any equipment problems.

Combat Train conducted over four (4) missions to major camps surrounding Ramadi to include Al Taqaddum, Camp Fallujah and Al Asad. They remained the primary recovery asset for the Battalion. Combat Train escorted supplies to multiple positions in the battle space and remained the primary maneuver element for the movement of supplies to the companies. Combat Train was also utilized for Engineer missions that required additional security. Combat Train conducted over forty (40) missions in August.

Log Train increased its operations by adding an additional "Mid-day" run. This maneuver element allowed personnel and gear to flow to Hurricane Point from Camp Ramadi and then to other locations three (3) times a day. Log Trains provided movement support for several classes of supply and increased the overall office and common goods supplies for each FOB, COP and OP.

The EPLRS crypto changes completed during the month of August were completed manually. The Battalion conducted an EPLRS crypto change on 01 Aug and 15 Aug without incident.

The SIPR and NIPR exchange servers experienced sporadic outages during the month of August. This could be attributed to the amount of time between preventative maintenance cycles on the servers. Because of the problems during this month, an ASI was scheduled and executed to blow the dust out of the servers.

All of the Battalion's Blue Force Trackers (BFT) had their hard drives updated. The BFT hard drives were collected from all companies and sections. The hard drives were transported to Camp Ramadi, updated, and then returned to their owners.

The CX-13295 fiber that was running out the JCC was damaged twice during the month. The first time it was damaged, the 300 meter reel in the JCC compound was damaged. It was easy to repair this portion of the fiber because it was only 300 meters in length. Later in the month the 1000 meter segment at Buckeye was cut. When this wire was cut the decision to not run fiber out to the JCC was made. The alternate plan of running 26-pair cable to the JCC was executed. Shortly afterwards SIPR was setup over pair gain modems.

At the end of the month, five (5) new MRC-145 vehicles were received. The old MRC-145 vehicles were turned into the S-4 and the new vehicles had the MRC-145 mounts and radio installed.

The MRC-142 link to OP VA experienced sporadic outages during the month. Typically a power outage at OP VA initiates the outage. When the outage occurred, it took repeated attempts to refill the KG-194s and attempted "bumps" to the KG-194s to get the link back up and operational.

CHAPLAIN

The Battalion Religious Ministry Team (RMT) provided ministry to two Marine KIA and eleven Marine WIA during the month of August, and conducted two memorial services. The RMT also provided Reset the Force training in Combat Stress Prevention, Suicide Prevention, and Corps Values to all Marines and sailors. Warrior Transition training was provided to the Battalion ADVON prior to their departure. The Battalion Chaplain and RP visited and provided ministry to Marines and sailors at Government Center, North and South Entry Control Points, Camp Ramadi, Camp Blue Diamond, OP VA, and OP Hawk. Roman Catholic and Protestant services were facilitated for Hurricane Point. Eastern Orthodox Services in support of Ramadi area were conducted at Hurricane Point and Camp Ramadi. Additionally, Orthodox services were conducted in support of Multi-National Forces West at Al Asad, TQ, and Fallujah during the Feast of the Dormition of the Most Holy Lady Theotokos. Conducted forty-seven (47) marital counselings, thirty-nine (39) stress related counselings, and fifteen (15) grief related counselings. Toys, school, snacks and water supplies were also distributed to local Iraqi schools. Towards the end of the month, the RMT continued preparations for the RIP, Return and Reunion briefs and redeployment.

MEDICAL

Preparations have begun for the Battalion's return to CONUS. The BAS started the Post Deployment Health Assessments (PDHA) and plans to have them all completed before 15 September. Warrior Transition Briefs and PDHA's for the 3/8 advanced party were completed prior to their transition back to CONUS. The I MEF Psychologist visited the AO to assist with combat stress cases. The CMR was reconciled in preparation for turn-over with 1/6. The advanced party for BAS departed on 31 Aug.

INDIA COMPANY

On 01 August, India Company promoted four Marines to Lance Corporal and two Marines to Sergeant. On 02 August, India Company combat meritoriously promoted one Marine to Corporal. At 1751 Post 2 at OP Hawk observed a grey four door sedan which was identified by Battalion as a BOLO vehicle. The post observed an insurgent get out of the vehicle with an AK-47. Post 2 engaged with four (4) rounds of 5.56. The post could not confirm BDA. On 03 August at 1334, OP Horea received approximately forty (40) rounds of small arms fire from the red trim building. They returned fire with seven (7) rounds 40mm, forty (40) rounds 7.62 and twenty five (25) rounds 5.56. No BDA was confirmed. At 2030, Post 1 of OP Hawk was engaged by small arms fire from the south. Post 1 and 2 returned fire with twenty (20) rounds 5.56, one hundred (100) rounds 7.62, and one (1) AT-4. A BDA was attempted, but found nothing. On 04 August at 0645, India 2 received small arms fire from an unknown number of insurgents while extracting from an over watch position. After marking their position with smoke and communicating with OP Hawk, Post 5 engaged the enemy position with .50 cal. Both units were unable to conduct BDA. At 2017 OP Horea received small arms fire from the Institute and returned fire with 5.56 and 7.62. At 2035, Posts 2 and 3 of OP Horea received small arms fire from the east. They returned fire with 5.56 and 7.62. After both engagements, no BDA was conducted. From 05 to 07 August, India Company, in conjunction with 1st 506th Army, conducts Iraqi Police screening at ECP 8. First Platoon India Company provided over watch and screening patrols to disrupt insurgents from attacking ECP 8. On 05 August at 1357, Posts 5, 6, and 2 at OP Horea received small arms fire from the north and west along with one RPG from the Gay Palace. At 1710, Post 6 of OP Horea positively identified three (3) insurgents with AK-47s and an RPG in the Two Balconies building. Post 6 engaged with 7.62. Post 3 positively identified two (2) additional insurgents with AK-47s south of OP Horea and engaged with 7.62. No BDA was conducted from either post. At 1730, OP Horea receives small arms and medium machine gun fire from the Two Balconies building. Horea returns fire with 7.62, 5.56, 40mm, and two (2) SMAW rounds. The FAC at OP Horea then controlled a Laser Maverick strike on the Two Balconies. The strike was successful and all firing ceased. On 11 August at 1209, while on a foot patrol in the vicinity of the Ramadi Hospital, India 3 received one round 7.62. There were no casualties and the patrol could not positively identify the origin of the round, so they did not return fire. At 2004 OP Horea received small arms and medium machine gun fire from the west, south and east. At the same time OP Hawk received one round of indirect fire and small arms fire from the south. While still returning fire, OP Horea received one RPG from West Graves which missed the OP. At 2053, the FAC at OP Horea controlled one Hellfire on the North Tower causing all fires to cease

from that location. At 2104, the FAC at OP Horea controlled one Laser Maverick on the Gay Palace which caused a cease of all fires from that location. OP Horea continued to receive sporadic small arms fire from the north in the vicinity of Pope Street. At 2116 all enemy fire ceased and at 2130 TIC is declared over. No BDA was conducted. On 15 August at 0900, OP Horea received small arms and machine gun fire from the east. OP Horea returns fire with 5.56 and 7.62. There were no casualties during the fire fight and no BDA was conducted. On 18 August at 0000, during a combat patrol, India 2 received small arms fire from the west and maneuvered to clear a house in which the fire was coming from. Nothing was found in the house. Upon exiting the house, they received small arms fire again from the west. OP Hawk launched QRF to support India 2. While the QRF strong pointed Escondido Rd, India 2 entered a house and found one AK-47. Upon completing their search, they moved back to OP Hawk with QRF in support. At 1936, Posts 5 and 6 at OP Horea received small arms fire from Cinema St., and Posts 2 and 3 received small arms fire from the east. OP Horea returned fire with one hundred sixty five (165) 7.62 and three (3) 40mm. There were no casualties from the fire fight and no BDA was conducted. At 2015, OP Horea received small arms fire and one RPG from the Sadam Mosque. OP Horea returns fire and no casualties resulted from the fire fight. On 20 August at 2015, OP Horea received small arms fire from Charlie House. OP Horea positively identified muzzle flashes and returned fire with fifty (50) rounds 7.62. There were no casualties from the fire fight. On 24 August at 1310, the Iraqi Police at the Ramadi Hospital received contact resulting in one (1) Iraqi Police KIA and one (1) Iraqi Police WIA. India 3 launched QRF from OP Hawk in support of the Iraqi Police. Once on scene, the fire ceased and India 3 conducted the MEDEVAC. On 27 August at 1018, India 4/2, located at the Ramadi General Hospital, engaged four (4) AIF with AK-47s at Escondido and Med Rd. with fifty (55) rounds 7.62. No BDA was conducted. At 1027 OP Horea took sporadic small arms fire from the east. Unable to PID, OP Horea did not return fire. At 1047 Op Hawk received small arms fire from the Gray House to the southwest. Post 2 returned fire with thirty five (35) rounds 7.62. No BDA conducted. On 29 August at 1005, post 3 at OP Horea engaged 4 AIF with AK-47s moving west on Nip Tuck and engaged with eighty (80) rounds 5.56 and five (5) rounds 40mm, no BDA was conducted. On August 30 at 2006 OP Horea received an RPG from the vicinity of Dobber. Post 6 returned fire with ninety (90) rounds 7.62, no BDA. On August 31 at 1350, OP Horea received heavy contact from the vicinity of the Gas Station to their west. Post 4 and 5 returned fire with thirteen (13) rounds 40mm and one hundred (100) rounds 7.62, no BDA. During this reporting period, India Company awarded (1) Navy and Marine Corps Commendation Medal with Combat Distinguishing Device, (17) Navy and Marine Corps Medals, and (4) Navy and Marine Corps Medals with Combat Distinguishing Devices.

KILO COMPANY

Kilo Company continued with enduring tasks of site security and continued fortification projects at the Government Center and at OP Sunset during the month of August. Patrolling efforts consisted of mounted day and night patrols to the south and southwest of the Government Center to provide QRF and local security for the two fixed sites and to patrol dead space. Nightly dismounted over watch positions and security patrols continued throughout the Company's AO to provide additional security of fixed sites and for continued maintenance on

ground sensors and cameras around CP 295.

On 12 August Kilo Company sustained two (2) routine casualties at the Government Center. The Marines received mortar shrapnel wounds. Kilo 4 conducted medevac to Charlie Medical with no further incident. On 28 August, Kilo Company sustained one (1) urgent casualty while standing post at Post 10 of the Government Center from direct fire. The Marine received bullet shrapnel wounds. Kilo 1 conducted medevac to Charlie Medical with no further incident.

Operation Central Park commenced on 21 August 2006. This was the plan to construct a Ramadi Green Zone. By the end of the month all of the buildings north along ASR Michigan in sector H-4 had been demolished. On 26 August a Leader's Recon of the F-1 and F-5 sectors was conducted by the Brigade Commander, TF Commander, and the Company Commander in order to determine the zone of expansion for the Ramadi Green Zone.

On 29 August, the Government Center received a complex attack consisting of four (4) 60mm mortar impacts, small arms, and medium machine gun fire. The Government Center was engaged by a squad size element of AIF from the vicinity of Castle 2 and 1 AIF with a PKC from the intersection of Butcher Rd and Hospital Rd. Government Center also received small arms fire from an AIF element 100 meters north of the Government Center. AIF were observed carrying an assortment of Medium Machine Guns and AK-47 type weapons and were engaged by northern facing posts and Post 4. After 30 minute firefight SAF ceased, BDA could not be confirmed due to location and darkness.

LIMA COMPANY

The beginning of August saw Lima Company providing humanitarian assistance to local residents. Over twenty (20) generators were provided to needy Iraqis in our Battle Space. Concurrently, Lima implemented a series of counter improvised explosive devices ambushes in the C14 and D4 sectors. On 05 August, Lima 3 conducted a mounted patrol and was attacked with a command launched improvised rocket launcher. The company took three WIA, one (1) urgent and four (4) routines, and the HMMWV they were in was a mobility kill. The following day Lima 1/2 was in a counter-IED ambush and was attacked with sniper fire, no damage to personnel or equipment. On 07 August, Lima 1/2 in the same over watch position when they were attacked with seventy (70) rounds of medium machine gun and small arms fire. They returned fire and killed one (1) insurgent, and wounded another.

On 10 August, Lima 3 assisted Civil Affairs in the delivery of supplies to the water treatment plant in C7. Upon completion, Lima 3 conducted a targeted raid and detained a Battalion HVI. On 12 August, Lima 3 was inserting Lima 1 and was hit by an IED causing a mobility kill on one of their MTRV's. Lima 1 continued their mission on foot, and Lima 3 picked up a wrecker to recover the vehicle. Lima 1 later detained five (5) insurgents in the D4 sector. Lima 4/1 was conducting a counter IED ambush on 15 August in the vicinity of checkpoint 295 and observed four (4) insurgents emplacing an IED, they engaged with 5.56mm resulting in one (1) EWIA.

On 17 August, Company L assumed control of the north entry control leading into Ramadi, it was also manned by a platoon of Iraqi soldiers and a squad of Iraqi police. On 20 August, Lima 1 and Lima 3 conducted a cordon and search on the Oil Department in D3, and detained thirty two (32) individuals for questioning regarding insurgent activity in the facility. While providing the outer cordon for Lima 1,

Lima 3 was engaged with four (4) rounds of precision rifle fire. While Lima 4 was manning OPVA they were attacked with 2 RPG and SAF. They PID two insurgents and engaged with 7.62mm but could not obtain a BDA, no damage to persons or equipment. On 23 August Kilo company was extracting a STA team and was attacked while moving east across checkpoint 295. Post 4 OPVA PID five (5) insurgents firing on Kilo from the roof of a building in the H1 sector, and engaged with 40-50 rounds of 7.62mm no BDA. On 29 August, Lima 3 was defending the north ECP while Iraqi Police and Iraqi soldiers searched random vehicles entering Ramadi. In the late afternoon a vehicle entered the search area, and exploded resulting in one (1) friendly WIA and one (1) civilian interpreter WIA. Lima 3 responded and provided medevac to Charlie Medical, but the one Marine and interpreter were pronounced DOA. Lima 2 immediately began re-building the ECP.

WEAPONS

During the month of August Weapons Company incorporated new tactics in order to capture and kill the insurgents in Ramadi. The company inserted three ambush positions, throughout the month, along MSR Michigan in heavily IEDed locations. The ambush positions were emplaced for 24-48 hours at a time while mounted patrols added depth to their defense during that period. This prevented numerous IEDs from being emplaced, resulted in at least two (2) EKIA and increased freedom of movement for friendly units.

In addition to the ambush positions Weapons Company continued with mounted patrols, SVCPS, and cordon and searches throughout the AO. Targeted cordon and searches resulted in the capture of two battalion level HVIs and numerous individual associates of those insurgents. Also, on two occasions the company utilized two route clearances Dagger teams to clear the possible IEDs that until this month could not be addressed. Due to the Dagger missions and escorting EOD out on mounted patrols, the PIED tracker reached an all time low allowing for greater freedom of movement for the battalion.

Due to the outstanding performance of the company's Marines, there was (1) meritorious Sergeant and (1) meritorious Lance Corporal promotion awarded. On Aug 31, the company's advance party consisting of the Executive Officer, Operations Chief, and a NCO departed to return back to CONUS.

H & S

During the month of August the primary focus of H&S Company has been the upcoming Relief in Place. On 01 August, a new contract took effect for FOB Hurricane Point which added a permanent civilian electrician and air conditioning mechanic to Hurricane Point. This was an important step toward maintaining the capability of self-sustaining life support aboard Hurricane Point and will provide 1/6 the assets to address AC and electrical issues internally.

On 04 August, the Battalion reassigned duties of the Career Retention Specialist. This was due to the current Career Retention Specialist returning to CONUS for the remainder of the deployment. Because of this, the H&S Company staff began focusing on the administrative duties of preparing reenlistment packages for several Marines. These submissions were vital to achieving the end strength needed by the Battalion for the following fiscal year. On the same

day, the LPO for the Company's BAS was selected for promotion to Chief Petty Officer.

The Hurricane Point Guard Force continued to make force protection improvements on the Camp. On 06 August, the Guard Force completed repairs on the guard post at the front entrance of the camp. This project significantly aided in providing a defense-in-depth for the Entry Control Point to the camp. On 08 August, The Battalion Jump CP was involved in an RPG attack in which one Marine sustained injuries from the shrapnel of a RPG. The Marine involved was categorized as Not Seriously Injured and returned to duty the same day. From 12-24 August, Headquarters & Service Company conducted an inventory of weapons, optics, and serialized equipment. This was done to identify discrepancies on the Certificate of Memorandum Receipt and facilitate the smooth transition of weapons, optics, and equipment in the upcoming Relief in Place.

On 15 August, the Company began the Post-Deployment Health Assessments. These assessments assist the battalion medical staff with evaluating potential medical and psychological needs that the Marines and Sailors may have coming off of this deployment.

On 17 August, it was announced that 3d Battalion, 8th Marines Headquarters & Service Company had one (1) Lance Corporal that was selected to be combat meritoriously promoted to Corporal. Additionally, the Platoon Sergeant for the Scout Sniper Platoon was the individual selected within II MEF for the combat meritorious promotion to Gunnery Sergeant.

On 21 August, Brigadier General Neller visited FOB Hurricane Point in order to speak with the primary staff of 3d Battalion, 8th Marines and gain situational awareness on the recent operations and tactics, techniques, and procedures used in the battalion's Area of Operations.

From 20-24 August, the Cooks Section conducted a complete inventory and area cleanout. This entailed accounting for all equipment and stocks on hand as well as preparing for the reception of the 1st Battalion, 6th Marines personnel aboard Hurricane Point for the Relief in Place.

On 26 August, the Battalion conducted Camp Wide Cleanup/Reorganization for the arrival of relieving unit. On 31 August, The Advance Party for the battalion departed Ramadi, Iraq to retrograde back to CONUS. This immediately preceded the arrival of the 1st Battalion, 6th Marines Advance Party which was scheduled to arrive in Ramadi, Iraq around 01 September.

The activity of the Temporary Holding Facility picked up substantially during this month. The battalion processed a total of 104 detainees, 38 of which were sent up to the RDF.

Command Chronology 01 AUG 06 to 31 AUG 06
Section III: Sequential Listing of Significant Events

<u>DATES</u>	<u>EVENTS</u>
03 AUG 06	BATTALION WIDE BLUE FORCE TRACKER HARD DRIVE UPDATE
04 AUG 06	LIMA COMPANY DELIVERES 17 GENERATORS TO FAMILIES IN THE C13 AND D4 SECTORS
05 AUG 06	LIMA COMPANY PATROL ATTACKED WITH IMPROVISED ROCKET LAUNCHER RESULTING FOUR (4) FWIA
05 AUG 06	COMPLEX ATTACK AT OP HOREA. ONE (1) LMAV EXPENDED ON TWO BALCONIES BUILDING
05-07 AUG 06	IP SCREENING AT ECP 8
07 AUG 06	LIMA OVERWATCH POSITION ATTACKED. LIMA RETURNS FIRE RESULTING IN ONE (1) EKIA AND ONE (1) EWIA. NO FRIENDLY CAUSALTIES
08 AUG 06	BATTALION JUMP ATTACKED WITH RPG RESULTING IN ONE (1) FWIA
11 AUG 06	COMPLEX ATTACK AT OP HOREA. ONE (1) HELLFIRE AND ONE (1) LMAV EXPENDED
12 AUG 06	KILO COMPANY RECIEVES IDF AT GOVERNMENT CENTER RESULTING IN TWO (2) FWIA
14 AUG 06	FIBER OPTIC CABLE AT SNAKEPIT DAMAGED
15 AUG 06	BATTALION POST DEPLOYMENT HEALTH ASSESSMENT BEGINS
17-21 AUG 06	BATTALION CONDUCTS OPERATION VALDEZ WITH THE PURPOSE OF DISRUPTING THE ENEMY'S MAIN SOURCE OF FINACIAL SUPPORT
20 AUG 06	LIMA COMPANY DETAINS 32 INDIVIDUALS WHILE CONDUCTING OPERATION VALDEZ
21 AUG 06	KILO COMPANY COMMENCES OPERATION CENTRAL PARK
21 AUG 06	BGEN NELLER VIP VISITS FOB HURRICANE POINT
24 AUG 06	IRAQI POLICE AT HOSPITAL ATTACKED RESULTING IN ONE (1) IP KIA AND ONE (1) IP WIA
26 AUG 06	LEADERS RECON OF F-1 AND F-5 SECTORS TO DETERMINE THE ZONE OF EXPANSION FOR RAMADI GREEN ZONE
28 AUG 06	POST 10 AT GOVERNMENT CENTER RECIEVES SEVERAL ROUNDS OF ACCURATE DIRECT FIRE RESULTING IN ONE (1) FWIA
29 AUG 06	ECP NORTH IS ATTACKED WITH SVBIED RESULTING IN ONE (1) FKIA AND ONE (1) CIVILIAN INTERPRETER KIA
29 AUG 06	COMPLEX ATTACK AT GOVERNMENT CENTER
31 AUG 06	OP HOREA RECIVES HEAVY CONTACT FROM THE GAS STATION. RETURNS FIRE WITH 5.56, 7.62, AND 40MM. NO BDA
31 AUG 06	3/8 ADVANCE PARTY DEPARTS

Command Chronology 01 AUG 06 to 31 AUG 06
Section IV: Supporting Documents

Enclosures

(1) "A Suspect Iraqi: Do You Fire?" Julian E. Barnes, 15 August, 2006.
Los Angeles Times

(2) "In Ramadi, The Force Isn't Huge But The Task Is" Jim Michaels,
August 29, 2006. USA Today

MARES Reportable Equipment:

TAMCN	NOMENCLATURE	AUTH	ONHAND	QTY DEF
A0067	AN/MRC-148	9	9	0
A0425	M-DACT	11	13	0
A0918	AN/PSC-5	1	1	0
A1225	EPLRS NETWORK MAN	0	2	0
A1955	AN/MRC-142	2	2	1
A1957	AN/MRC-145	7	14	0
A2042	AN/PRC-150	8	13	0
A2043	MBITR URBAN VER	0	92	0
A2044	MBITR MARITIME VERS	120	7	113
A2068	AN/PRC-117F	8	6	0
A2069	AN/PRC-113 (V) 3	0	4	0
A2070	AN/PRC-119/A	139	69	0
A2074	AN/VRC-88D	0	21	0
A2075	AN/VRC-89D	0	2	0
A2078	AN/VRC-92D	0	4	0
A2079	AN/PRC-119F	0	46	0
A2152	AV/VSQ2C (EPLRS)	15	20	0
A2167	AN/VRC-88	59	14	0
A2168	AN/VRC-89	50	1	1
A2169	AN/VRC-90	2	2	6
A2505	SB-3614 (V)/TT	0	2	0
A2508	SWITHING TELEPHONE AUTO 3	1	1	0
A8100	AK648/U	17	24	0
B0012	AIR COND 1800BTU/HR 60HZ1		1	0
B0589	EXCAVATOR, ACE	1	1	0
B0730	MEP-016B GENERATOR	9	9	0
B0891	MEP-803 GENERATOR, 10KW	9	9	0
B0953	MEP-805 GENERATOR, 30KW	1	1	0
B1021	MEP-806 GENERATOR, 60KW	1	1	0
B1580	SIXCON FUEL MOD	2	2	0
B2085	SIXCON FUEL TK	4	2	1
B2460	TRACTOR, FULL TRACK	1	1	0
B2462	TRACTOR, FULL TRACK D7G	0	1	1
B2483	LOADER BACKHOE CAT420D	1	1	0
B2561	EXTENDABLE BOOM FORKLIFT1		1	0
B2566	TRUCK, FORKLIFT 4000LBS	1	1	0
B2567	TRACTOR, ARTICULATING	2	1	0
D0001	UAH TRUCK UTILITY 4X4	138	136	0
D0003	AMK 23	30	26	0
D0004	AMK 25	6	6	0
D0880	M149 WATER TRAILER	6	8	0
D1001	TRK AMB, HMMWV M997	2	2	0
D1002	TRK AMB HMMWV, M1035	3	3	1

D1073	TRUCK, DUMP, MTR	2	2	0
D1125	TRK HMMWV TOW CARRM1045	4	4	4
D1158	TRK CARGO, HMMWV M1123	45	47	0
D1213	MTR WRECKER/MK36	2	1	0
E0180	CIRCLE AIMING M2A2	4	5	0
E0207	COMMAND UNIT, M98A1	8	8	0
E0330	AN/UAS-12C A/C	8	7	0
E0915	SMAW MK153	21	21	0
E0935	LAUNCHER TOW, M220E4	8	8	0
E0980	MACH GUN, CAL .50 M2	30	26	0
E0989	MACH GUN, 240G 7.62MM	85	68	0
E0994	MACH GUN, 40MM MK-19	30	30	0
E1065	MORTAR, 60MM, M224	9	12	0
E1095	MORTAR, 81MM, M252	8	8	0
E1460	RIFLE, SNIPER M40A3	0	9	0
E1475	RIFLE, SNIPER .50 CAL	0	2	0
E1911	TOW TEST SIGHT/ TSM-152	2	2	0
E1912	TOW TEST SIGHT/ TSM-140B2		1	1

USA Today

August 29, 2006

Pg. 11

In Ramadi, The Force Isn't Huge But The Task Is

Province holds 'key to the future of Iraq'

By Jim Michaels, USA Today

RAMADI, Iraq — These days, the main focus of U.S. and Iraqi military efforts is in Baghdad, where militias and death squads threaten to destabilize a fragile government. Thousands of U.S. and Iraqi troops are pouring into Baghdad to reinforce the 52,000 already there.

It's getting less attention, but a much smaller force is working to subdue Ramadi, the capital of Anbar province, where Sunni insurgents are entrenched.

"This is relatively lightly held by coalition and Iraqi forces," says U.S. Army Col. Sean MacFarland, commander of the brigade responsible for the Ramadi area. "I don't have overwhelming force here."

The city has about 300 trained and equipped police, though the Iraqi government has authorized a force of 3,000. There are about 2,000 Iraqi troops and several thousand U.S. soldiers in and around the city, which has about 300,000 residents. By contrast, about 12,000 U.S. and Iraqi troops were used to push insurgents out of Fallujah — half the size of Ramadi — in a major offensive in November 2004.

Sixty miles west of Baghdad, Ramadi is part of the Sunni heartland that supported Saddam Hussein and has resisted U.S. forces since the invasion in 2003. Stabilizing Anbar is critical to winning over the Sunni minority, which ruled Iraq for decades and distrusts the new Shiite-dominated government. "Anbar is

key to the future of Iraq as a nation-state," says Marc Chretien, a senior U.S. adviser to Iraq's government.

The office of Anbar's governor, Maamoun Sami Rashid al-Awani, is inside a heavily fortified compound guarded by U.S. Marines. Moving from one part of the government compound to another requires sprinting to avoid sniper fire from within the rubble of nearby buildings. When a Marine convoy came to escort the governor home on a recent day, one of the vehicles was hit by a roadside bomb. The explosion disabled a Humvee but caused no injuries.

Most locals stay away from the government building. Four of 31 members of the Anbar Provincial Council have been killed in the past several months, says Marine Col. Frank Corte, al-Awani's U.S. adviser. Insurgents have tried to kill al-Awani 30 times. The handful of employees in the building come from outside Ramadi. They live in the government building during the week and return home on weekends.

"He's a government of one," MacFarland says of al-Awani.

Holding the line here is important because it allows U.S. and Iraqi forces to concentrate on securing Baghdad. "I'm not the main effort," MacFarland says. "Baghdad is. But I'm trying to take the heat off Baghdad."

Stabilizing Ramadi is going to take time. MacFarland says that even if he had more troops, he would take a deliberate approach to driving insurgents out and wouldn't replicate the Fallujah offensive, which left much of that city in ruins. His troops are establishing combat outposts in the city in a classic counterinsurgency strategy of creating secure areas and expanding them slowly. The outposts are manned by U.S. and Iraqi forces and serve to protect neighborhoods and launch reconstruction projects. There are six such outposts in the city now; about four more are planned.

U.S. and Iraqi forces will also establish checkpoints and set up barriers to seal off neighborhoods, restricting enemy fighters' movement and forcing residents to take responsibility for security in their own areas. "My intent is to take this city back without destroying it," says MacFarland, whose headquarters outside the city is in a sprawling camp that is thick with mud when it rains and choked with dust as fine as talcum powder the rest of the time. Temperatures regularly reach 120 degrees in the summer.

U.S. and Iraqi forces in Ramadi clash with the enemy daily. Marine Lt. Col. Steve Neary, commander of the battalion charged with securing the government center and other parts of the city, has had 16 Marines killed in action in the past six months. He says the battalion — 3rd Battalion, 8th Marine Regiment — has had 120 Marines wounded in the same period; 72% have been returned to duty. A battalion is typically about 800 Marines.

"We're taking a lot of casualties, but we're dealing out a lot of casualties," MacFarland says.

Insurgents earlier this year burned down the city's telephone switching station. Cellular and land-line service have yet to be restored. A train station and soccer field renovated with U.S. money during quieter times have been badly damaged in recent fighting or by attacks. "The tactics of the insurgents is to destroy everything we touch," says Marine Lt. Col. Mark Bramwell, a civil affairs officer.

Rebuilding has been slow. Al-Awani says Anbar is being starved of reconstruction money by Iraq's new Shiite-dominated government. That government has said it wants more guarantees that the provincial administration is stable enough to safeguard the money. A Ramadi bank was recently robbed of more than \$6 million in central government funds.

Anbar is the only province not to receive its share of \$2 billion set aside in Iraq's 2006 budget for development and reconstruction projects throughout Iraq, says

Corte, the governor's adviser. Every other province has gotten 10% to 40% of its share of the money. Anbar is due \$95 million. "They're trying to weaken the government here," al-Awani says. Without the money, dozens of projects are on hold, including clinics, schools and water treatment facilities, says Corte, a reserve officer who is a Republican state representative in Texas.

The U.S. military says its success in driving insurgents out of Fallujah and a series of operations along the Euphrates River valley west of here pushed insurgents into Ramadi, which lies on major roads leading to Baghdad from Jordan and Syria.

"When Fallujah happened, a lot of guys moved here," Neary says.

Reconstruction in other parts of Anbar is progressing, however. Fallujah is establishing a police force. Businesses and homes are reopening there. The Marines say they've had similar success in rebuilding towns in the Euphrates valley after clearing them of insurgents last year.

Al-Awani says it's his duty to stay put in his job until his province is on its feet. "If someone in your family is sick, you don't abandon him," he says. "You make him better."

Los Angeles Times

August 15, 2006

Pg. 1

A Suspect Iraqi: Do You Fire?

In a land where insurgents mingle on the streets with civilians, U.S. troops have to make split-second decisions on life or death.

By Julian E. Barnes, Times Staff Writer

RAMADI, Iraq — Pfc. Phillip Busenlehner still thinks about his choice. Unbidden, in quiet moments, it creeps into his head.

The 20-year-old Marine from Birmingham, Ala., was standing guard at a combat outpost in central Ramadi when he saw a man 400 yards away.

"He was popping around the corner, back and forth, back and forth," Busenlehner remembered. "He was observing the post. But that far back, how much could he really be observing?"

Was he trying to figure out if it was safe to move? Or was he plotting an attack? Hand near the trigger, Busenlehner faced the most difficult choice a soldier or Marine must make in a war: to kill, or not?

With insurgents hiding among ordinary Iraqis, that decision often must be made in a split second. The wrong choice could mean a guerrilla gets a chance to lay a roadside bomb that kills more Americans or Iraqi civilians. Or it could mean an innocent Iraqi dies at the hands of Americans and a whole neighborhood turns against U.S. forces, setting back the war effort and putting more insurgents on the street.

Busenlehner, one year into his four-year stint with the Marines, radioed his squad leader. He got permission to shoot. Now, the choice was his.

In another part of the city, near one of the most dangerous intersections in Ramadi — the military calls it "Firecracker" — two squads of Marines gathered in an Iraqi family's living room. The neighborhood had seen some spectacular firefights between insurgents and Americans. It was also a prime area for improvised explosive devices, or IEDs, the roadside bombs that have proved deadly to U.S. troops in Iraq.

The platoon had been visiting families in the area, knocking on doors, trying to collect information and build goodwill, the first step toward trying to take the region back from insurgent domination.

The conversation wound down, but the Marines remained, waiting for other military units to move through the area. The Iraqi homeowner began flipping channels on his television. He settled on an English-language movie with Arabic subtitles. Lt. Ryan Hub, the platoon leader, turned toward the television and groaned. The TV was showing American soldiers pinned down as they were attacked by waves of men with AK-47s and rocket-propelled grenades.

"'Black Hawk Down,' " said Hub, 25, originally from Calhoun County, S.C. "It's not a good sign, man."

Moments later, Marines on top of the house sent down an urgent message: They had spotted, a few blocks away, two men on another roof that overlooked the Firecracker intersection.

Hub ran upstairs. The Marines' night-vision equipment gave them a clear view of the men. They could be IED triggermen. But the night was hot and many homes in the neighborhood had no power. Families without fuel for their generators stayed cool any way they could. Some chose to sleep on their roofs.

Hub faced a choice.

"It's a difficult decision," Hub said, as his Marines kept watch on the two men.

"More than likely if they were to do anything, they would trigger an IED. But there is no way we could confirm that from here. We can't just shoot these two people. And that is one of the problems of urban war."

A poster has been hung at each of the Marine outposts around Ramadi. Titled "Roadmap to Success," the poster outlines the tenets of the fight in Iraq, as the Marine Corps sees them.

"The Iraqi people are not our enemy, but our enemy hides amongst them," the fifth tenet reads.

Below that line, the poster lists two corollaries.

"You have to look at these people as if they are trying to kill you, but you can't treat them that way," one says.

"Be polite, be professional, have a plan to kill everyone you meet," the other says.

Marines in Ramadi sometimes joke that they wish they were fighting in World War II — the Germans at least wore uniforms. Here troops have to look for more subtle clues.

"You can tell a good person from a bad person," said Lance Cpl. Michael Nichols, a 21-year-old member of Kilo Company from Martinsville, Va. "If they are innocent they will cross the alleyway and not look at us."

The toughest calls are the peekers. In Ramadi, soldiers and Marines will see Iraqis peek from behind a building. Are they nervous because they're afraid they could be shot mistakenly? Or are they up to no good? If a Marine waits too long

before deciding, the next time the man peeks out from behind the building a rocket may be flying at his guard post.

"This is a thinking-man's job," said Nichols' partner, Lance Cpl. Robert Dean, a 21-year-old from Elkton, Va.

Nichols agreed. "There is no set rule," he said. "You have to have common sense. This place revolves around common sense."

In Ramadi and across Iraq, young men, most of them barely of legal drinking age, are being asked to make what seems to be an impossible decision. The Marines' leaders do not downplay the difficulty. But Capt. Mark Liston, the weapons company commander for the 3rd Battalion, 8th Marine Regiment, said the Marines under him had learned to observe closely and assess quickly.

"The 20-year-old Marine will always amaze you with his ability to put everything in context," Liston said. "It revolves around the bright young man being able to make a decision and accept risk."

The precise guidelines about when to pull the trigger vary across Ramadi, depending on how violent the area is — and depending on which military unit controls the territory.

In downtown Ramadi, where there are few residents and a great deal of insurgent activity, what constitutes hostile intent is different from that in the residential areas where U.S. forces are trying to make people feel safer. It also depends on what the company commander sets as his unit's mission. Some are trying to kill insurgents. Others are trying to make residents feel more secure.

Around the Firecracker intersection, Lima Company was trying to win over the residents, so Hub's platoon had to tread carefully.

From where Hub was standing, there was no way to tell if the two men on the other rooftop had hostile intentions. So Hub and his platoon made a plan to move quickly and silently through the streets to try to catch the pair.

The Marines ran toward the house, but when they were less than 200 feet away a dog began to bark. We are given away, Hub thought to himself.

Moments later the platoon burst into the home. Two men were sleeping in the living room. The Marines raced upstairs to the roof. No one was there.

There were no blankets or pillows. No evidence anyone was sleeping. A break in the wall around the rooftop would allow easy access to adjoining buildings. There were escape routes and places to get a good view of vehicles driving through the Firecracker intersection.

Cpl. Thomas Wolabaugh, 22, one of the platoon's squad leaders, developed a theory. There was a four-man team. On the adjoining roof, out of view of the first house the Marines were at, one or two people lay down watching the intersection. On the other roof were the two people spotted by the platoon. Those men were the security element, listening for dogs barking and looking for approaching troops, Wolabaugh said.

Hub nodded. The theory seemed right. But it was only theory. Hub was convinced the men were insurgents. He was also convinced he did the right thing by not having his Marines pull the trigger.

"You are so close," Hub said. "You have everything but the concrete evidence. It is very frustrating."

Each day hundreds of such choices are made in Ramadi. Thousands are made in Iraq.

So what choice did Pfc. Busenlehner make when he saw the man looking at the guard post?

"We had two people standing on post," Busenlehner recalled. "He fired the first time and I fired the second time. Both shots hit. And yes, we got him."

Busenlehner's description was almost clinical, as if he was trying to distance himself from the memory.

"After you get the OK, you try to stop thinking of them as a person and start thinking of them as a target," Busenlehner said. "It makes it easier."

The more experienced members of Busenlehner's company say once the choice is made, Marines have to think that way.

"It is a fundamentally dehumanizing act," said Gunnery Sgt. Preston Lambert, a 38-year-old from Maryvale, Ariz. "And at that moment you pull the trigger, you can't look at the target as a person or you won't do it."

Once the man is killed, Marines are trained not to think about it, to shove it into a corner of their minds. Lambert called it compartmentalizing.

Busenlehner never found out whether the man he shot was an insurgent. Officers in Ramadi think retrieving the bodies of people killed from the outposts is not worth risking the lives of Marines.

As the sun began to set over another, quieter guard post in Ramadi, Busenlehner scanned his section of the city. The ethos of the Corps say Marines do not discuss these life-or-death decisions, except perhaps to joke about them. But with the choices it is impossible not to talk about them, not to think about them.

"You really don't try to think about it," Busenlehner said. "But sometimes it does pop into your head and the moment plays out over and over again."

There was little emotion in his voice, as if indulging his feelings would be dangerous. But the story flowed out of him easily, as if he had been waiting a long time to talk.

